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EIGHTH REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS OBSERVER MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. By paragraph 4 of its resolution 1260 (1999) of 20 August 1999, the Security Council authorized the provisional expansion of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) with the necessary equipment and administrative and medical support to perform the tasks set out in paragraph 38 of my seventh report to the Security Council, dated 30 July 1999 (S/1999/836).

2. The Security Council also requested the Secretary-General to submit an additional report to the Council as soon as possible including recommendations for the mandate and structure of the enhanced United Nations peacekeeping presence that might be required in the country. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

State of implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement

3. Since my seventh report to the Security Council (S/1999/836), both the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF) have reaffirmed their commitment to the peace process. President Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah has maintained close contact with Corporal Foday Sankoh, the leader of the RUF. He also established contact with Johnny Paul Koroma, the leader of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). President Kabbah urged both leaders to return to Freetown.

4. On 28 July, at the invitation of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the International Contact Group on Sierra Leone met in London. The meeting was attended by President Kabbah and representatives of 23 countries and international organizations, including the

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United Nations. It generated strong political support for the peace process, as well as pledges of financial, humanitarian and logistical support, including assistance for the Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. The meeting also called for the provision of much needed substantial, logistical and other support from the international community to ECOMOG to enable it to carry out its mandate.

5. On 7 August, the first meeting of the Joint Implementation Committee established under the Peace Agreement took place in Freetown under the chairmanship of the Foreign Minister of Togo, Joseph Kokou Koffigoh, representing the Chairman of ECOWAS, President Gnassingbé Eyadema. The Joint Implementation Committee welcomed the significant steps taken in implementation of the Agreement, including the removal of legal impediments to enabling the RUF to participate in the governance of Sierra Leone; the submission of all nominations for cabinet and other positions; and the consultations between UNOMSIL and ECOMOG on their cooperation under the Peace Agreement. The Joint Implementation Committee also called for the provision of substantial logistical support from the international community to ECOMOG.

6. In accordance with the decision to develop a strategic framework for Sierra Leone, my Special Representative, Francis Okelo, has put in place the necessary modalities, in close cooperation with the United Nations agencies involved. A Steering Committee has been established to develop a coherent and comprehensive response involving the Government and its international and domestic partners.

Major challenges to the peace process

7. A number of incidents have occurred since the signing of the Peace Agreement that have threatened the security of UNOMSIL and ECOMOG personnel and revealed a serious rift between the RUF and the AFRC. These have included the detention of UNOMSIL and ECOMOG personnel by a group of AFRC supporters at Occra Hills, some 70 kilometres east of Freetown; the detention of senior RUF leaders by the same group; a brief detention of a UNOMSIL helicopter by the RUF near Buedu; and the detention of an non-governmental organization member in Makeni. Those incidents underlined problems related to the effectiveness of command and control within the rebel groups and the commitment of some of the local groups to the peace process. The subsequent issuance by Mr. Koroma of a list of grievances about the Peace Agreement has further revealed the existing problems between the RUF and the AFRC. It is important that these issues be addressed by all concerned, as they can jeopardize the peace process in Sierra Leone.

8. The delay in the start of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme remains a serious cause for concern. Moreover, the continuing absence of Mr. Sankoh and Mr. Koroma from Sierra Leone and their failure to take up their duties in the implementation of the Peace Agreement have generated much anxiety among the Sierra Leonean people. In order to move the process forward, the two personalities should now take up their positions in the Government of National Unity and encourage their supporters to participate in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and to demonstrate their consistent commitment to the peace process. My Special Representative has met separately with both men in Lomé, Abidjan and Monrovia, where they have reaffirmed their

commitment to the Peace Agreement and pledged to continue to work together. They also undertook to return to Freetown. To date, they are still abroad.

III. MILITARY AND SECURITY SITUATION

9. The security situation in Sierra Leone has remained rather tense during the reporting period, though the ceasefire has generally been holding, apart from minor incidents connected with rebel forces foraging for food. The fluidity in the security environment stems primarily from the relationship between the RUF and the AFRC. Some supporters of the latter, especially the large group based at Occra Hills, feel they were marginalized during the negotiation of the Lomé Peace Agreement.

10. Between 4 and 10 August 1999, a group of UNOMSIL military and civilian personnel who had gone to Occra Hills to supervise the release of civilian non-combatants held by an AFRC group there were taken hostage, along with their ECOMOG escort. As a result of persistent efforts by President Kabbah, leaders of the region and UNOMSIL, all were released unharmed. However, they were robbed of their personal possessions and subjected to verbal abuse during their captivity. On 30 August, a number of senior RUF commanders, including Brigadier Dennis Mingo and Brigadier Mike Lamin, who were being conveyed back to Freetown by UNOMSIL military observers, were abducted by the AFRC near Occra Hills. The UNOMSIL personnel were briefly detained and then allowed to proceed after being robbed of their personal possessions. During the same period, the RUF leadership in Buedu, near the group's stronghold at Kailahun in eastern Sierra Leone, detained overnight a UNOMSIL helicopter dispatched there to bring back the family of Mr. Koroma to Freetown. The helicopter and its crew were allowed to leave the following morning unharmed and without incident. Several regional leaders, in particular President Charles G. Taylor of Liberia, were instrumental in the resolution of the above incidents.

11. The Occra Hills group has in the meantime considerably reduced its food foraging activities as a result of UNOMSIL patrols and food aid convoys, including those organized by the Interreligious Council of Sierra Leone, which were able to proceed unharmed to Lunsar and Makeni.

12. The Joint Monitoring Commission established under the Lomé Peace Agreement has been meeting regularly at UNOMSIL headquarters. Although handicapped at first by the absence of RUF representatives, the Commission has since been functioning quite effectively as some RUF and AFRC representatives have been participating in its work and assisting in monitoring and improving the security situation and sensitizing combatants on the provisions of the Peace Agreement. However, the RUF has yet to participate in the provincial- and district-level ceasefire committees, which are, therefore, not operational. The recent participation of the Occra Hills AFRC representatives in meetings of the Committee has resulted in a considerable improvement in the security situation in the vicinity of Freetown.

13. The Committee on the Release of Prisoners of War and Non-Combatants, which is chaired by UNOMSIL, has also met regularly. The Government of Sierra Leone, ECOMOG and the Civil Defence Force have assured UNOMSIL that they have released

all persons detained by them. However, full compliance by the RUF and AFRC is still awaited. It is believed that the rebel groups are still holding several thousand civilians, including at least 3,000 children reported missing following the rebel incursion into Freetown in January 1999. I call on the RUF and AFRC to release all persons detained by them.

14. As at 21 September, a total of 105 United Nations military observers and 2 medical personnel were deployed in Sierra Leone. It is anticipated that the remainder of the 210 observers and 35 medical personnel authorized by the Security Council in its resolution 1260 (1999) can be deployed by mid-October (see annex).

IV. HUMAN RIGHTS

15. Some progress has been made with regard to the human rights and related provisions of the Lomé Peace Agreement. UNOMSIL has assisted the Sierra Leone Human Rights Committee in monitoring their implementation and in publishing a periodic bulletin on the matter, which is distributed widely.

16. However, the human rights institutions and mechanisms provided for in the Peace Agreement have not yet been established. There is an intense debate regarding the nature of the proposed truth and reconciliation commission. In that regard, UNOMSIL has facilitated the consultative work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Office has proposed a number of preliminary steps, which are being considered by all concerned. UNOMSIL has also facilitated the visit to Sierra Leone of the special adviser to the High Commissioner for Human Rights on national institutions regarding the setting up of the proposed human rights commission. The Government is currently considering the advice of the High Commissioner on the issue.

17. UNOMSIL is working closely with the United Nations humanitarian assistance coordination unit and other agencies to ensure the wide dissemination of human rights information relevant to the formulation and implementation of return programmes. UNOMSIL will also assist the relevant agencies with a view to promoting respect for United Nations principles on the return of internally displace persons.

18. Ambitious countrywide sensitization programmes as regards the human rights aspects of the peace agreement are being undertaken by the National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights, the Interreligious Council and the Campaign for Good Governance. Most programmes, however, have very limited outreach into areas under the control of the RUF and the AFRC. UNOMSIL is also working with the humanitarian community to promote more comprehensive and timely countrywide sensitization on the human rights and humanitarian provisions of the Agreement, in particular as regards issues of access and humanitarian delivery.

Protection of children

19. My Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Olara Otunnu, visited Sierra Leone from 30 August to 3 September 1999, with the assistance of

the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), to assess first-hand the current conditions of children and explore ways to respond better to their needs.

20. At the conclusion of his visit, Mr. Otunnu outlined an agenda for action, aimed at ensuring the rehabilitation and welfare of children in the aftermath of the war. The agenda proposes, inter alia, giving special attention to child combatants in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process; securing access to and immediate release of children abducted by the rebel forces; provision of training to the new national army on human rights, child rights and humanitarian standards; and giving priority attention to the special needs of children, in particular to those mutilated, sexually abused, gravely traumatized and displaced, as well as to their basic educational and medical needs, in the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts of the country.

21. Mr. Otunnu welcomed the renewed commitment made by the Government of Sierra Leone and the Civil Defence Force not to recruit children under the age of 18 for the armed forces; the same commitment has now been made by the RUF leadership. He appealed to political leaders in the country to demonstrate their commitment to peace by taking bold and concrete measures to implement the Lomé Peace Accord and for the RUF and AFRC to acknowledge fully their role in the atrocities committed during the war, many of which were directed against children and women.

22. The plight of children is among the most pressing challenges currently facing Sierra Leone. The United Nations, in particular UNICEF, will continue to assist the Government in its efforts in that regard. I appeal to the international community to ensure adequate and sustained resources to address children's needs during the peace process and beyond.

V. HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS

23. Three months following the agreement by the parties to allow unhindered humanitarian access throughout the country, the needs of more than 2.6 million Sierra Leoneans in the RUF/AFRC-controlled northern and eastern regions of the country remain largely unmet. In the immediate wake of the 3 June statement on access, the humanitarian community was able to assess and in some cases launch limited humanitarian operations and food distributions in several key towns in previously inaccessible rebel-controlled areas. This revealed remarkably high levels of severe malnutrition in both children and adults. In the most affected areas, malnutrition rates in children and nursing mothers have reached the highest level recorded since the start of the conflict. Malaria, respiratory infections and nutrition-related illnesses are rampant. Cases of cholera have also been reported. Severe malnutrition persists also in the Southern and lower Eastern Provinces. Conditions are only expected to worsen as the rainy season continues. In response, aid agencies have increased food, medical, agriculture, child protection, water and sanitation activities.

24. Friction between former elements of the Sierra Leone Army and the RUF and the resultant insecurity in some areas of the country have jeopardized humanitarian operations as well as plans for their further expansion. In particular, the situation in Occra Hills has had considerable humanitarian

implications. Humanitarian agencies and civil society groups have taken some exceptional measures to address those concerns and to build confidence in the peace process. With support from the humanitarian community, the Interreligious Council of Sierra Leone was able to provide a one-time ration of food to ex-combatants in the Occra Hills, Lunsar and Makeni. Simultaneously, humanitarian assistance was provided to more than 120,000 civilians in Lunsar and Makeni. In most areas, such parallel food distribution was successful in reducing the targeting of civilians by ex-combatants searching for food. I therefore urge the donor community to support the continuation of assistance to ex-combatants in their transition to civilian life, as a sign of the international community's commitment to the peace process, as well as a means of lessening the diversion of food from civilians. However, while pre-demobilization assistance to non-active combatants will help reduce tensions, the provision of aid is only one aspect of the problem. Until a secure environment is established, it will remain impossible to provide adequate emergency assistance to the population, let alone move towards reconstruction activities.

25. Meanwhile, humanitarian assistance needs are expected to triple concurrently with the increase of access to previously "closed" areas of Sierra Leone. The current inter-agency consolidated appeal, which is requesting donors to provide a modest $22 million, has received only 27 per cent of that amount. A new appeal for Sierra Leone will be launched in November and I hope that donors will contribute generously to meet the vast humanitarian needs.

26. The return of over a million internally displaced persons as well as about half a million refugees currently in neighbouring countries has yet to commence. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has so far been unable to reach many areas of origin in Sierra Leone and so has not been able to assess whether conditions there are conducive to the return of internally displaced persons and refugees. UNHCR is presently drawing up plans for a mass voluntary repatriation of refugees in consultation with the Governments concerned.

VI. DISARMAMENT AND DEMOBILIZATION

27. Towards the end of August, the Government of Sierra Leone, working in close cooperation with the World Bank, the United Kingdom and UNOMSIL, developed an operational plan for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration into society of an estimated 45,000 fighters in Sierra Leone.

28. The Government of Sierra Leone will execute the disarmament and demobilization process through the National Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, in close cooperation with ECOMOG, UNOMSIL and United Nations agencies. As is currently envisaged, each ex-combatant will receive a transitional safety net allowance in local currency, to be paid in two instalments. The costs of the programme, provisionally estimated at some $40 million, will be financed through the multi-donor trust fund established by the World Bank. So far, the trust fund has received approximately $19 million, contributed by the United Kingdom ($10 million) and the World Bank ($9 million).

29. According to the programme, combatants would first be taken by their commanders to one of an estimated total of 27 reception centres, where their weapons and ammunition would be surrendered, registered and destroyed. The programme also envisages the establishment throughout the country of up to 10 centres where demobilization would take place.

30. The estimated number of combatants is based on assessments made by ECOMOG and UNOMSIL. Figures of this kind invariably represent rough estimates, since the number of fighters can vary over time. Family members and camp followers are often included in the total numbers, while field commanders often lack the command and control mechanisms to maintain an accurate count. With these caveats, the strength of the RUF is estimated at some 15,000, approximately the same size as the Civil Defence Force. The AFRC comprises some 6,000 men, slightly fewer than the current armed forces of Sierra Leone, which have a nominal roll of 7,000. Some 2,000 fighters are thought to belong to various paramilitary groups. UNICEF estimates that about 12 per cent of all combatants are children.

31. Under the programme, UNOMSIL would verify the eligibility of fighters arriving with their weapons at reception centres. ECOMOG, under United Nations supervision, would then collect, register, disable and destroy the weapons, either in situ, which is the preferred course of action, or at designated locations. After being registered and issued with identification documents for transit purposes, the disarmed fighters would then be taken to demobilization centres. UNICEF would make special arrangements for child soldiers.

32. During the initial stages of the demobilization process, the disarmed fighters would receive basic necessities and pre-discharge orientation sessions in order to prepare them to re-enter civilian life. They would receive the first instalment of the transitional safety net allowance before being returned to their home communities. This process is expected to take a minimum of 90 days. However, I believe that every possible action should be taken to shorten the period substantially.

33. Implementation will take place in phases, starting with, as currently envisaged, the camp at Lungi, which is operational and has 667 combatants. The camps at Port Loko I and II, Daru and Kenema are expected to open by the end of September. The opening of camps scheduled to be opened at Makeni and Magburaka is awaiting clearance from the RUF/AFRC. Within 30 days thereafter, it is envisaged to open centres at Kailahun, Koindu, Moyamba and Bo/Pujehun.

34. Security at the centres will initially be provided by ECOMOG and monitored by United Nations military observers. It is envisaged that there will be at least 3 United Nations military observers to each reception centre and 10 observers to each demobilization centre. ECOMOG, which is mandated to provide security for the disarmament process, is expected to deploy sufficient forces to each centre. ECOMOG and the United Nations will also supervise the confinement of the Sierra Leonean armed forces to barracks and storage of their weapons in the armoury. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, while urgent in nature, will probably follow a flexible and phased approach, to be determined on the basis of conditions on the ground, the cooperation of the parties and the availability of peacekeepers to provide security.

VII. FUTURE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN SIERRA LEONE

Cooperation between ECOMOG and the United Nations

35. Post-conflict military and security issues in Sierra Leone are governed by part four of the Lomé Peace Agreement (S/1999/777, annex), namely, articles XIII-XX. Those articles provide for the new mandates to be approved for ECOMOG and for UNOMSIL; the creation of a neutral peacekeeping force comprising UNOMSIL and ECOMOG to disarm all combatants of the RUF, Civil Defence Force, AFRC, Sierra Leone Army and other paramilitary groups; their subsequent demobilization and reintegration and the restructuring and training of the Sierra Leone armed forces.

36. In view of the intent of the Peace Agreement that a neutral peacekeeping force should comprise both ECOMOG and UNOMSIL, I wrote on 13 August 1999 to President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria to propose a division of labour between the two organizations in the implementation of the agreement. In his response, dated 19 August, President Obasanjo, citing the gradual return of peace, informed me of his intention to withdraw 2,000 Nigerian troops every month, commencing in August and ending in December 1999. The great majority of the approximately 12,000 ECOMOG troops in Sierra Leone are Nigerian. The President also agreed, however, to my proposal to deploy a United Nations peacekeeping force to include some Nigerian and other ECOWAS troops.

37. On 25 August, in Lomé, ECOWAS adopted a new mandate for ECOMOG providing, inter alia, for the Military Observer Group to do the following:

(a) Maintain the peace and security of the Sierra Leonean State;

(b) Provide protection for UNOMSIL and the personnel working in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme;

(c) Provide security throughout the country for UNOMSIL military observers, human rights monitors, humanitarian aid workers and the staff of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme;

(d) Disarm all fighters of the RUF, Civil Defence Force, former Sierra Leone armed forces and paramilitary groups, in conjunction with UNOMSIL;

(e) Conduct cordon and search operations to recover hidden arms;

(f) Provide protection and escort duties to VIPs, including government officials, United Nations officials and non-governmental organization personnel involved in humanitarian relief activities;

(g) Deploy troops in all disarmament centres and arms collection sites to enhance disarmament and provide security to encamped ex-combatants;

(h) Establish safe corridors and locations for the settlement of refugees and the distribution of humanitarian relief materials;

(i) Provide security for the weapons and ammunition retrieved during disarmament and demobilization;

(j) Assist in the destruction of recovered arms and ammunition;

(k) Conduct security patrols, including the guarding of key points.

38. The withdrawal of Nigerian troops began on 31 August, but was then suspended following a meeting between President Obasanjo and President Kabbah. The Government of Nigeria has indicated that the withdrawals will resume in October. Nevertheless, it appears to be the case that, even as it draws down its forces in Sierra Leone, ECOMOG would be ready and indeed intends to continue to provide security for the areas where it is currently located, in particular around Freetown and Lungi, and to initiate and proceed with at least the early stages of disarmament and demobilization. In order to be able to do so effectively, ECOMOG has drawn up and circulated to potential donors a list of major logistics requirements.

39. The main requirements include four helicopters and more than 100 vehicles, including trucks, four-wheel drive vehicles and ambulances, as well as spare parts, oil and lubricants; communications equipment, including base stations and 700 hand-held radios and 20 satellite phones, and engineering requirements.

40. As a result of further meetings with Nigerian officials, during which they clarified their plans in Sierra Leone, it would seem appropriate to proceed on the basis that a robust United Nations peacekeeping force should be deployed to ensure the implementation of the Peace Agreement. In order to derive maximum benefit from the experience acquired by ECOMOG, it would be a marked advantage if a substantial element of the United Nations force be contributed by Governments currently participating in ECOMOG. This could also allow considerable economy in transportation and installation costs and, perhaps more important, would ensure the immediate availability to the United Nations force of troops who would be familiar with the conditions on the ground. Obviously, it would be important to ensure effective coordination during the hand-over phase from ECOMOG to the United Nations.

Concept of operations of the United Nations force

41. The main purpose of the United Nations force would be to assist the Government in carrying out its programme to disarm and demobilize all former combatants and thereafter to help create the conditions of confidence and stability required for the smooth implementation of the peace process. The United Nations force would not be mandated to ensure the security of Freetown and the international airport at Lungi or to provide protection for the Government. Those vital tasks, as well as any operations against rogue elements unwilling to participate in the peace process, are expected to remain the responsibility of ECOMOG.

42. It is envisaged that the United Nations force would deploy throughout the territory of Sierra Leone and for that purpose would require firm assurances of freedom of movement and cooperation from all parties, as provided for in article XV of the Lomé Peace Agreement.

43. At the same time, in view of the volatility of the security situation in Sierra Leone and the fragility of the peace process, the United Nations force should be large and capable and should operate on the basis of robust rules of engagement.

44. I would therefore envisage the following mandate for such a force:

(a) Assisting the Government of Sierra Leone in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan;

(b) To that end, establishing a presence at key locations throughout the territory of Sierra Leone, including at disarmament/reception centres and demobilization centres;

(c) Ensuring the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel;

(d) Monitoring adherence to the ceasefire in accordance with the ceasefire agreement of 18 May 1999 through the structures provided for therein;

(e) Encouraging the parties to create confidence-building mechanisms and support their functioning;

(f) Facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance;

(g) Supporting the operations of United Nations civilian officials, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his staff, human rights officers and civil affairs officers;

(h) Providing support, as requested, to the elections, which are to be held in accordance with the present constitution of Sierra Leone.

45. To accomplish these objectives, the United Nations force should comprise six infantry battalions, as well as the necessary specialized support units, including logistics, communications, engineering and air and other transportation. The force should be adequately provided with helicopters and armoured personnel carriers. The existing medical support unit should be further increased in size. A helicopter-borne rapid reaction element capable of responding to apparent threats to the implementation of the peace agreement or to the security of United Nations personnel would also form part of the force structure. It would be necessary to expand the number of military observers from the currently authorized 210 to 260.

46. Each infantry battalion would be approximately 750 strong and the specialized support units should comprise about 250 personnel each. The rapid reaction element would require another 200 personnel, bringing the total number of military personnel to some 6,000. It would also be necessary to increase accordingly the number of civilian administrative personnel to support the force. Each battalion would have the capacity to provide security at one demilitarization and demobilization centre along with two or three reception centres. Deployment should take place as rapidly as possible.

47. It would be my intention to seek contributions of troops for a significant part of the force from ECOWAS countries, in particular those currently contributing to ECOMOG. Such troops could be deployed fairly rapidly to Sierra Leone if they are not already stationed there as part of ECOMOG. It would then be possible to provide these troops with the necessary logistical support as soon as United Nations specialized support units are deployed, their strength to be determined in accordance with an assessment of the current logistical resources of ECOMOG. Units provided by Member States outside the region should be inducted as soon as possible, preferably by air, with their equipment, which should include armoured personnel carriers.

48. In view of the complexity of the tasks envisaged in the Sierra Leonean environment and the consequent need for effective command and control, it is envisaged that one of the troop-contributing countries should provide a core force headquarters, including the force commander and his staff. In addition, it is planned to establish joint operations centres with ECOMOG at headquarters and, if necessary, also at subordinate levels in the field.

49. Having said that, the total number of troops would be subject to periodic review in the light of conditions on the ground and the progress made in the peace process, in particular in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. As the process unfolds, the overall security situation in the country improves, I would recommend to the Security Council a reduction of the force level, possibly by one or even two battalions.

50. Throughout the process, the question of security must remain paramount. Even the deployment of the sizeable United Nations force proposed above will not fully substitute for the functions so ably performed by ECOMOG so far. The above concept of operations for the United Nations force is predicated upon ECOMOG remaining in Sierra Leone. Conversely, in the eventuality of the withdrawal of Nigerian troops, as announced by President Obasanjo, a reassessment will be required of the security conditions in Sierra Leone as it passes through the sensitive process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. If that transpires, I may be obliged to revert to the Security Council with further proposals, addressing the additional tasks for and the possible strengthening of the United Nations force to assume the functions now fulfilled by ECOMOG at its present strength. In the eventuality of a full withdrawal by ECOMOG, a much stronger United Nations force of about 10 infantry battalions would be required and contingency planning should keep this possible scenario in view.

51. The concept of operations and composition of the mission's substantive civilian components would remain as described in my seventh report (S/1999/836). It would also be my intention to redeploy to Sierra Leone up to six civilian police advisers, who would coordinate with other international efforts in that regard, in particular those of the Commonwealth. The United Nations advisers would, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1181 (1998) of 13 July 1998, advise the Government of Sierra Leone and local police officials on police practice, training, re-equipment and recruitment, in particular on the need to respect internationally accepted standards of policing in democratic societies, to advise on the planning of the reform and restructuring of the Sierra Leone police force and to monitor progress in that regard.

52. As Sierra Leone is gradually emerging from its civil war, it is crucial for it to develop a credible and reliable mechanism to ensure its own security and thereby decrease its dependence on outside assistance in that regard. For the time being, however, the restructuring and training of the Sierra Leone armed forces, as provided for in the Lomé Agreement, as well as the training of the police, will require essential support and assistance from the international community. I appeal to donors to make the necessary contributions to these ends.

VIII. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

53. As indicated in an addendum dated 11 August 1999 to my previous report to the Security Council (S/1999/836/Add.1) and pending consideration by the General Assembly of my proposed budget for UNOMSIL for the 1999-2000 financial period, I have obtained the concurrence of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions with regard to the utilization of the amount of $5.5 million for the maintenance of the mission from 1 July to 31 October 1999.

54. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1260 (1999), in which the Council authorized the provisional expansion of UNOMSIL, I have requested additional commitment authority from the Advisory Committee in the amount of $6.3 million to provide for the mission's immediate requirements in connection with the deployment of additional military and civilian personnel and equipment.

55. The cost estimates associated with my proposal for the deployment to Sierra Leone of a United Nations peacekeeping force as described above will be submitted to the Security Council shortly in an addendum to the present report.

56. As at 31 August 1999, unpaid assessments to the UNOMSIL special account amounted to $4.5 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to $1,965.9 million. Contributions to the trust fund to support United Nations peacekeeping-related efforts amounted to $2.1 million, with expenditures authorized in the amount of $1.1 million.

IX. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

57. With the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement, the people of Sierra Leone have an opportunity to repair some of the damage caused by their long conflict and to set their country back on the road to peace and prosperity. In order to do so, they will have to make a strong national effort, but they will need significant international assistance in that regard. Many of the efforts needed are of a long-term nature, requiring the commitment of the Government and donors for many years to come.

58. More immediately, however, Sierra Leone is in urgent need of security. Without security, it will not be possible to carry out the programme of disarming and demobilizing approximately 45,000 ex-combatants, many of them children, and thus removing a threat to the stability of the State. Without security, it will not be possible to engender among all parties the confidence

they need in order to implement the political and human rights-related provisions of the Peace Agreement and to ensure humanitarian assistance throughout the country.

59. In order to restore and maintain that confidence, there are certain urgent steps that must be taken. One is the immediate return of Mr. Sankoh, who, in accordance with the Peace Agreement, should now assume important functions within the Government of Sierra Leone. The commitment of Mr. Sankoh and his senior associates, including Mr. Koroma, to the Agreement they have signed is an essential element in its effective implementation. I therefore call upon them to return without delay to Freetown to take part in the peace process, as desired by the people of Sierra Leone.

60. It is also important for the international community to contribute to the multi-donor trust fund established by the World Bank to support the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. Although an amount of $19 million has already been contributed, much more will be required to finance the long processes of demobilization and reintegration.

61. In the more immediate future, the United Nations can play its part in bolstering security in Sierra Leone by the swift deployment of the robust force as proposed above. Such a force, which is called for by the Lomé Peace Agreement, would supplement the commendable efforts made over the past two and a half years by ECOMOG and would, it is hoped, incorporate a substantial number of troops made available by ECOWAS countries.

62. I therefore recommend to the Security Council that it authorize the deployment of the United Nations force, which, together with the UNOMSIL military observers and civilian components, would be known as the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in accordance with the mandate set forth in paragraphs 41-52 above. The operation would be led by my Special Representative, assisted by a Force Commander with the rank of major-general.

63. The incorporation of many officers and men from ECOWAS countries into the new United Nations force would underline the appreciation owed to them by the international community for the sacrifices made by and the achievements of ECOWAS and ECOMOG in Sierra Leone. I reiterate my own tribute to all personnel serving with ECOMOG for the invaluable contributions they have made and appeal to the member States of ECOWAS to maintain their troops in Sierra Leone. The presence of those troops will continue to be indispensable for the success of the peace process. In the same vein, I renew my strong appeal to donors to contribute generously to ECOMOG, or directly to its troop-contributing countries, in order to ensure that they have the means necessary to perform their vital tasks.

64. Having said this, it is clear that the international community will not be able to maintain a major military presence in Sierra Leone indefinitely. I therefore urge the Government of Sierra Leone to expedite the establishment and training of its national police and armed forces, without which it will not be possible to achieve long-term stability, national reconciliation and the reconstruction of the country.

65. I should also like to express my appreciation to my Special Representative, Francis Okelo, to the Chief Military Observer, Brigadier-General Subhash C. Joshi and to all the military and civilian personnel of UNOMSIL who have achieved so much in conditions that were often difficult and dangerous.

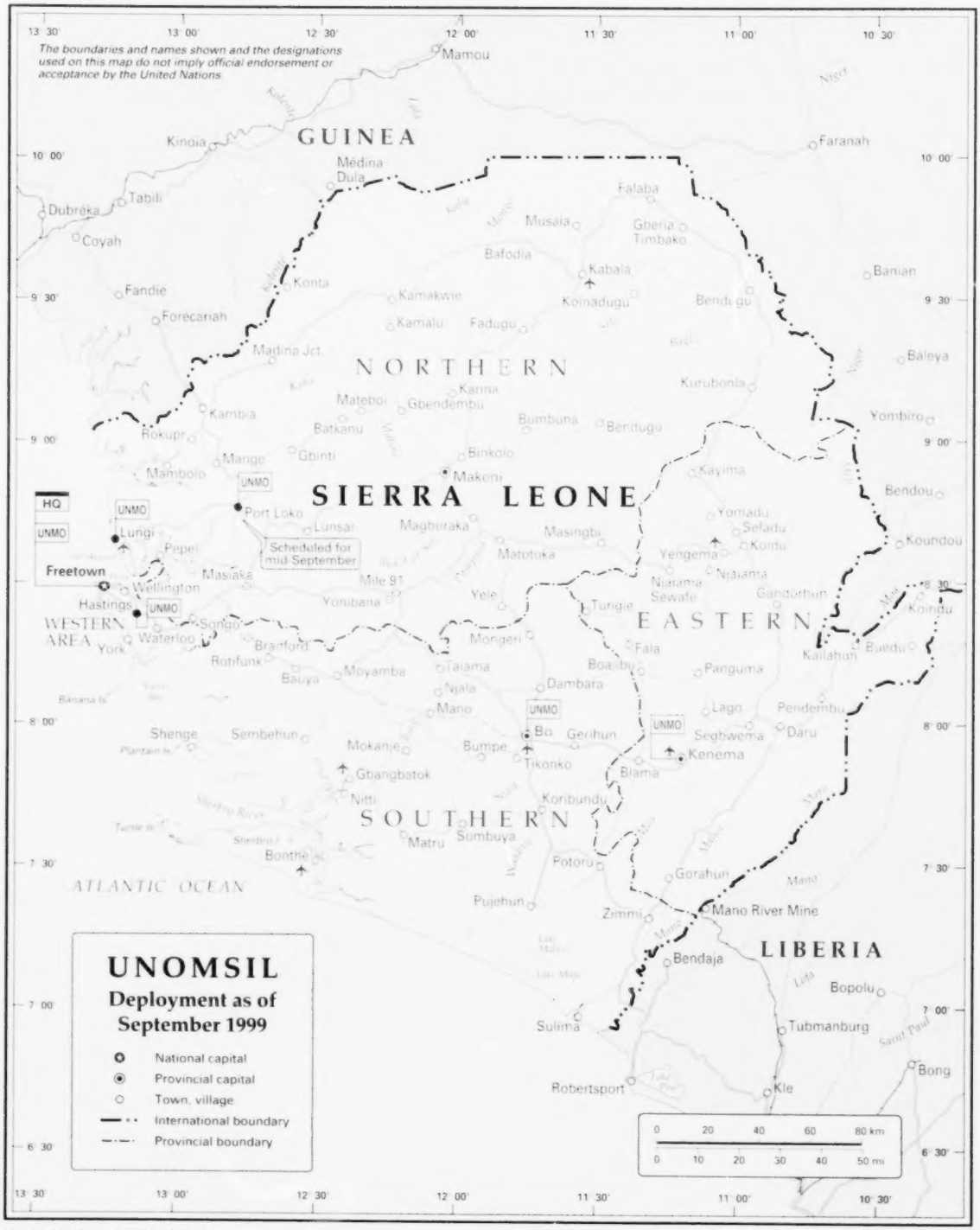
Annex

United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone: contributions as at 21 September 1999

	Military observers	Others[a]	Total
Bangladesh	2		2
Bolivia	4		4
China	3		3
Egypt	5		5
France	1		1
Gambia	2		2
India	6[b]	2	8
Jordan	5		5
Kenya	11		11
Kyrgyzstan	1		1
Malaysia	5		5
Nepal	6		6
New Zealand	2		2
Norway	5		5
Pakistan	5		5
Russian Federation	8		8
Slovakia	2		2
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	15		15
United Republic of Tanzania	12		12
Zambia	5		5
Total	105[b]	2	107

[a] Medical team.

[b] Includes the Chief Military Observer.



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